

## **Communityworks – our origins, aims and ethos....**

Communityworks was set up in 2003 by local people from the area including St Augustine's Church and residents and tenants groups. Local people felt strongly that there was nothing for them in their community and they wanted this to change. In 2004 we became a charity and a company limited by guarantee, controlled by a Board made up from the local community. We are based in what was the old St Augustine's First School which was refurbished into large community centre in 2006. We are now a thriving community project which incorporates a Children's Centre that has a wide range of activities including a nursery for 2 to 5 year old children and opportunities for children and adults across the age range. We have developed our activities based upon the needs of local people. These change over time and we continue to adapt to ensure that we are still meeting current needs.

Our aims have also changed slightly with time; however they have essentially remained true to the original vision. We believe that we have had a very positive impact on the local community and during term time we see between 500 and 600 people through our doors each week. We continue to make history with people, whether it is supporting a child develop their skills in preparation for school or an adult to speak English or get their very first job - or even secure a place at University.

### **Communityworks have these four main aims:**

1. Building social cohesion through bringing together individuals and changing communities. Seeking to understand each other and celebrating our differences, leading to a thriving neighbourhood.
2. To equip people with skills, knowledge, confidence and resilience to enable them to meet their needs and discover new solutions.
3. Work together with children, young people, adults and older people to encourage routes to improve life chances.
4. To be a community resource that promotes good health and well-being.

## **Values and Ethics**

### **Promotes equality**

Equality (or equal opportunities) is about all people being treated similarly, unhampered by artificial barriers or prejudices or preferences, except when particular distinctions can be explicitly justified. It is about protecting certain groups of people against unfair treatment based on a particular personal characteristic. This protection is normally based on those groups covered by legislation i.e. age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

We are committed to treating every person that is in contact with CW fairly, whether they are employed by CW, volunteer or access activities or sessions. We will offer equal opportunity to employment and participation – except where there is a good reason to exclude a particular group. For example, we might need to positively discriminate a certain group if they would otherwise be disadvantaged or would feel excluded. An example would be that both our Exercise and Zumba Class are women only; however we would very happily set up a separate class for men – if they wanted one. Further we will do all that we can to remove any barriers that certain groups of people may face, in order to protect against unfair treatment based on a particular personal characteristic.

### **How we do this:**

We have a detailed Recruitment & Selection of Staff Policy to ensure that we make every effort to give everyone a chance of employment whatever their status or position. We also challenge behaviour that discriminates and seek to equip people with the skills they need to uphold their individual rights. We have guidance on how you can expect our staff and volunteers to behave and we also have rules on how we expect others to behave towards each other and our staff and volunteers.

## **Celebrates diversity**

Diversity is about recognising, valuing, and embracing the differences which people have.

We continue to seek to be an inclusive organisation which has a culture that values difference and what that can bring to our community. We are fortunate to have an extremely diverse community in the Otley Road and Undercliffe area and that is something to celebrate as a strength.

### **How we do this:**

CW encourages mutual understanding and wider tolerances of people's differences. People are unique and we all have our individual differences and skills; if we bring these together we will have so much potential as a community. We seek to encourage everyone towards an ethos of reciprocated respect to build an environment, which embraces the benefits of living and working in a diverse community, by being a welcoming and inclusive presence and supporting those that are often marginalised by society to feel valued and important.

## **Empowering people**

Empowering people is about enabling people to take control.

We seek to achieve this by equipping people with the skills to sustainably improve their lives. We have seen many people grow in confidence and ability through their involvement with CW and we want to see many more.

### **How we do this:**

We can enable people to develop and grow and build up their confidence, self-belief and self-esteem. So we want to move people on from depending us but rather working in partnership with a shared responsibility. We recognise the importance of personal responsibility to maximise people's life chances by giving them a real sense of place in society – rather than surviving from one day to the next. We want to help the people of this community come together to bring about a thriving neighbourhood, full of confident and capable citizens.

## **Listening to people, evolving and learning**

Everyone has the right to be listened to whoever they are and however they feel.

Often people feel that no-one is interested in them and that they are not important. At CW we want everyone to know that they can have a voice and that they are valued along with their views. We want to see people develop their full potential and learn new skills or gain knowledge to feel in a better place.

### **How we do this:**

We offer learning opportunities so that people can become more resilient and better able to face the challenges of life. We have a Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure so that you can tell us how you feel about CW. We create opportunities for people to get involved in shaping what we do all the way up to becoming a Board Director. We encourage volunteers and help them develop to become work ready. We design activities at the right level and employ some people with additional languages to enable those with little English to have their voice.

## **Welcoming**

People who come into contact with CW will be welcomed ie they will know they have been noticed, be encouraged and remember their encounter.

Otley Road and Undercliffe Community Works – to give us our full official title is an initiative for everyone and every individual person from the community is very welcome here. We don't want to just say it; we mean it and we want you to experience it when you contact us or visit us. If you feel that you are not made to feel welcome you must tell us and we will change.

**How we do this:**

We will greet you warmly when you arrive. We will maintain a high quality environment for you to experience. We will try to meet your requirements or signpost you to someone else who can. We will do our best to find a place within our varied timetable that suits your situation and accommodate your needs when possible. We will ensure that our partners follow a similar approach and uphold our ethics and values, so that you have the same high quality welcome throughout.

**Respectful**

People who encounter CW will be given time and their views will be listened to and respected.

We aspire to treat you as individuals with the utmost respect which links in with the other ethics and values that we have. We will go the extra mile to achieve this; so don't worry about how you will be received – have confidence.

**How we do this:**

Beyond individuals we also seek to respect the community through knowing it well and listening to local views. Our Board of Directors are nearly all from the local community and ensure that we follow the direction that reflects what will help our neighbourhood to flourish. We are also very passionate about respecting the environment both locally and globally by working in partnership to make a difference. For example; we use fairly traded products and intercepted food to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure that resources are used very wisely without oppressing others. We are also a Living Wage employer and have robust policies including a Volunteer Policy so that those that work here are respected and valued for their contribution. We also respect the children that come here – whatever their age and all the values we have listed apply equally to them.

**Raising aspirations**

People will be encouraged to seek the best possible solutions and outcomes for their lives.

Although we are a locally based community project we recognise that there is a whole big world out there waiting for us to explore and thrive within. We believe that by working in partnership with local people we can open up new opportunities and support people to live their lives to their full potential – to be the very best they can be for both themselves, their families and the community. Wherever we are now we can be somewhere else with a little motivation and guidance – dreams can be dreamed and realised.

**How we do this:**

We always seek to provide a high quality learning environment in our nursery and other work with children and adults. We encourage people to get involved in new things and encourage people to believe in themselves and their own capability by offering opportunities to participate and learn. We work in partnership with people, both young and older, to realise that there are alternative ways of thinking and doing things. We go on trips to new places. We help people to write CVs so that they can gain employment. We praise people when they do well and we listen to people's ideas and help them build on them.